

Members Present: John Renner (Chair), Margaret Gullen, Dak Hardwick, Jean Sun Kim, Patrice Linehan, Laurie MacNamara, Brent Simer, and Mike Wenk

Members Excused: David Baker, Clarence Tong, Len Rubenstein, Engen Artemel and Benjamin Klein

Staff: Alex Braden

The Chair, John Renner, called the meeting to order at 7:09pm

Dak Hardwick made a motion to accept the minutes from April 8, 2014, which was seconded by Laurie MacNamara. The minutes were approved unanimously. Later, Patrice brought the minutes from April 15th. These minutes were reviewed and amended. Dak Hardwick made a motion to accept the minutes from April 15, 2014, which was seconded by Laurie MacNamara. These were approved unanimously.

Questions on the FY 15 Budget:

There was a question about whether the council considered the recommendation for a debt task force. No action on this recommendation was taken by the council yet.

There was a lively discussion on the #210 fire station. A BFAAC member asked why the City turned down the Safer Grant as several council members suggested using the grant to fund staffing in the future. Per Alex, the grant would include only two years of staffing and restrict the usage of the 12 personnel. The city would still have nearly \$500,000 of training and other costs in FY 15 and also not have any specific way to cover the cost after two years. There was also some discussion on precedent of the Council making a specific operational detail that should ideally be left to the department staff.

FY 2015 Staff Response to BFAAC Report:

Per Alex, this will be worked on through September with the aim of giving a substantive response in September.

FY 2015 After Action Discussion:

Anticipated Financial Plan:

The staff aims to develop this in the September/ October time frame with a plan to do so before FY 2016 budget guidance. The staff asked how BFAAC would like to be involved in the process and to let Alex know if anything specific should be included.

There was a follow-up question about whether it would include a 5 year revenue plan, and the answer was “yes.” A couple of BFAAC members emphasized the importance of being able to compare the budget to the financial plan. Some members would like the chance to review the assumptions in the financial plan, and staff agreed to ask about this input this summer (perhaps August).

As far as detail, the staff anticipates that the financial plan will include expenditures on a department level detail (and not program) due to the complexity of the analysis. Revenue will likely be aggregated by revenue type as in the monthly reports.

Suggested Improvements to the FY 2016 Process:

There was a discussion that having BFAAC present in between the two add/delete sessions did not work well as the Council went from focusing on the details to high level and then back to details. Later discussion focused on having BFAAC move up its report to early April.

The consensus is that the current process leads Council to focus on operational details instead of services in the add/delete process –e.g. the Council should focus on whether the city will fund eight vs nine engines and not on where the engines are deployed. It was agreed that BFAAC would make the recommendation to the Council in the fall to focus on the strategic big picture and revise the add/delete process. Ideally, this recommendation would be given at the Council budget retreat or at a work session in late September or early October.

A suggestion was made for BFAAC to identify the report topics ahead of time and assign it to each member so that the member can become that subject matter expert for the year. It was agreed that the committee could identify these topics in the coming year once guidance comes out. The advantages are that this format would create a more focused, shorter report and allow members to front-load the work in the fall (vs the spring). The chair could select subcommittee heads ahead of time and help assign topics to each member.

The Chair suggested the following rough schedule for the fall:

- August: focus on the financial plan
- September: look at the budget guidance for Council and develop items to put forth to the Council
- October: meet with the Council
- November: assign topics to members and decide roles/committee assignments
- January: start work
- Early April: present BFAAC report in April

There was a question about whether BFAAC should anticipate changes to the budget format for next year. Per staff, the general proposed budget format will likely stay the same for the foreseeable future. There may be further detail provided on the general fund vs all funds to clarify grant restrictions to programs and there may be some adjustment to the composition of the focus areas.

BFAAC Website:

Staff created a website at alexandriava.gov/bfaac where the last three reports can be found.

Dak Hardwick made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Margaret Gullen. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jean Sun Kim and Patrice Linehan